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STATE FOR EUR/NCE AND WHA/CCA
EUR/NCE FOR DKOSTELANCIK AND BPUTNEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/16/2017
TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [PO](#) [CU](#)
SUBJECT: POLAND: LIBERTAD ACT RESPONSE

REF: STATE 65523

Classified By: Acting Econ Counselor Laura Griesmer, Reasons 1.4 b, d

¶1. (C) Post is not aware of any Polish investment in Cuba and bilateral trade is very small. In the first eleven months of 2006 Poland exported \$18.0 million in goods to Cuba and imported \$0.2 million from Cuba. Exports for the first 11 months of 2005 were \$10.4 million while imports were \$3.2 million. The main Polish exports to Cuba are powdered milk and chemicals. Post is not aware of any bilateral trade agreements or exchange programs between Poland and Cuba. Generally, there are very few official contacts between the Polish Ministry of Economy and Cuban officials.

¶2. (C) Politically, Poland has worked actively since its own transition from communism to democracy in 1989 to promote democracy in Cuba, and this commitment is shared across the political spectrum. The current government has continued the previous government's policy of working to promote a strong EU policy of support for dissidents and sanctions against the Castro regime. No senior Polish officials have visited Cuba in recent years. Poland's embassy in Havana has been headed for some time by a Charge d'Affaires who has been active in meeting with dissidents, notwithstanding the personal difficulty this has caused him. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked with the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw and U.S. Interests Section in Havana to organize a video conference between the former President of Poland and the leader of Poland's Solidarity Movement, Lech Walesa, and Cuban dissidents in 2006. In a rare display of unity, Poland's current and former democratically-elected presidents supported a Cuba democracy conference organized by the Lech Walesa Foundation in Warsaw in late 2006. A senior MFA official attended a Cuba democracy conference in Florida in late 2006. The Government has quietly encouraged the Vatican to continue its support for a Catholic center and publication that provides some space for dissidents to express themselves. Poland is planning to send an ambassador to Havana in 2007, but one with strong credentials of support for democracy in Cuba. Poland does not accept the prospect of a transfer of power to Raul Castro in the event of Fidel Castro's death as automatic.

¶3. (C) The Polish government generally limits diplomatic visits between the countries. The Cuban First Deputy Minister of Tourism visited Warsaw in March 2007 to try to promote Polish tourism to Cuba and met with working level officials at the Ministry of Economy, the Polish Tourism Organization and the Polish Chamber of Commerce. No agreements were signed during his visit. During the visit, a possible investment in a hotel by ORBIS, a commercially held hotel and tourism company, was discussed. There has been no progress on the project and the Ministry of Economy believes the idea has been dropped.

